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Cover photograph by CLEMENS KALISCHER.



Kashmir mother and child  
UN photo

# Readiness: a second look

The new recognition of "readiness" brought about a change in attitude that, by and large, benefited children enormously. The concept of readiness implied that children's powers and abilities develop gradually from within in an almost universal sequence. This point of view relieved them from the unrealistic expectations of adults who believed that children would behave like small adults if they were persistently taught and exhorted. When given a chance to be children, many boys and girls became happier and more relaxed.

The understanding of readiness brought with it another significant idea: that within the framework of the universal growth pattern, no two children develop at exactly the same time or at the same rate. In looking afresh at each child, it clarified as never before his right to be himself. As a result, children are more and more being allowed to develop at their own pace.

But, as is so often the case with any new and important idea, the application of readiness is sometimes carried to extremes in everyday living. "Wait until a child is ready" is interpreted by some parents as "wait—and the child will do everything by himself." In waiting, they sometimes wait too long. They fail to notice the signs a child gives that he is ready to be helped toward new achievements in physical skills, intellectual understanding and social relationships.

Growing up isn't done in a vacuum. It is a two-way process in which a child develops within the framework set by adults. Despite what parents may say—"He toilet-trained himself without any help," for example—he does not do it alone. He needs their encouragement and support to know what is expected of him and to have the incentive to meet these goals. He also needs opportunities to try himself out in new ways as his abilities and perceptions increase. Without his parents' interest, a child loses interest, too; the favorable moment to take the next step is missed, and his development may be delayed.

It is therefore important that parents, teachers and the community look at children with an open mind. If they are neither pushing nor passive, they can then be free to respond to the child's reaching toward wider horizons.

ALINE B. AUERBACH

# First steps away from home

The child's readiness for new ventures is closely bound up with the parents ability to accept changes also

**N**owhere does the concept of "readiness" seem more obviously applicable than to the small child's first steps away from home and the surroundings he is used to—his first venture into the wide world, whether this means starting nursery school or only going across the street to spend the night with a friend. "Readiness" implies that there is to be a change, a progression from the familiar to the unknown; and however gradual the parents may try to make their child's entry into an outside world, there will always be a dramatic moment of cleavage, a sudden peak in the long, continuous process of separation which has been going on since birth, and will continue in the future. We smile at the mother who, watching the nursery school door close on her three-year old says, "This is the beginning of the end." Of course, she overstates the case, for there is never an "end" to the relationship between parents and children. But there is an element of truth in what she says — you might say it is the end of a two-dimensional child-parent world and the beginning of a three-dimensional child-parent-outsider cosmos.

For parents, this will often mean a sense of loss. When we realize what each step toward the outside means for the child — a shift in his entire environment as he knows it — and that probably he has had compara-

tively little experience in testing himself in relationship to people other than his parents, we can begin to grasp the magnitude of this step in the process of maturing from *his* point of view.

But it is necessary to go beyond that and to understand also the child's whole concept of the "outside." For, particularly to the very young child — and to a degree, to all of us — the environment outside oneself is a reflection of one's inner image or fantasy. Out of each child's experience, and, most importantly, what he imagines these experiences to have been, his picture of the world is formed. He only gradually experiences what is himself and what isn't. The very tiny baby cannot make this differentiation at all: it is as though he did not know where he started and stopped as a separate physical entity.

Although the complete prenatal dependence of the child on his mother is abruptly ended by birth itself (after which he must at least, for example, breathe for himself if he is to live at all), he must still turn to her, or another adult, for most of the necessities of life. Now, related to this very dependence, and growing out of it, is a feeling of powerfulness, of what might be called omnipotence: for who else is in a position to do nothing, to give nothing and yet to have

practically all of his needs taken care of? It is not accidental that we speak of "His Majesty, the Baby"!

Little by little, however, this pleasant picture is shattered by the dawning realization on the part of the child that it is not he, but the adults around him who have the power. For things being as they are and mothers being human beings rather than magical personages, even the most conscientiously cared-for baby experiences some pangs of hunger, and this inevitably disturbs the child's fantasy of omnipotence. In its place, though the baby's hunger may be only momentary, comes acute anxiety because of his real helplessness.

#### ***The loss of a kingdom***

To give up a kingdom and the feeling of power is neither easy nor pleasant, and the capitulation is accompanied by a struggle. It is, indeed, questionable if all remnants of this universal infantile fantasy are ever relinquished. Who else but a three-year old could say with utter confidence, "Let's go down to MY beach to see MY ocean"? Who else, but any person who refers to "my company," "my college" or "my country"?

Various solutions present themselves to the ruler in process of losing his throne. He can take the view that these adults who fail to recognize his supreme power are bad and stupid people who don't understand his importance. Or he may tell himself that if he submits to the adults' demands it is not because he is little and they are big, but because he really *likes* to do what they say.

This is, of course, a hypothetical reconstruction of how the baby feels. But psychological research into the inner lives and emotional experiences of adults and children, shows that both the child who tends to call his parents and other authoritative adults "bad," and the one who identifies himself with such people, and takes over their demands as his own, are attempting to deal with anxiety; and that this anxiety is caused by disturbance to their feeling of being all-powerful, which was related originally to their actual helplessness.

The connection of early experiences to the question of later readiness lies simply in the fact that new experiences can be better handled all round if the parent realizes the difficulty and ambivalence in the child that accompanies each step in his maturing. After the first differentiation between himself and his mother he must soon, if he is to grow up, begin to separate himself from her care and protection. And this process involves a constant search for some way to handle his feelings of power and helplessness. As adults, we associate readiness with a certain eagerness, an inclination to go forward, or at least with the state of full preparation for the next move. These feelings may be present in children, too. But we are apt to forget that for them readiness is primarily the psychological and physical ability to accept the frustration and fear and pain involved in each step that enlarges the horizons of their world. To be sure, there will be new pleasures and satisfactions ahead, but who can be certain of any new experience before it has been tried?

Another word frequently used in connection with discussions of readiness is *accept*: "is the child ready to accept so and so?" But here there is apt to be a confusion of *acceptance* with *liking*. Whether there is ever total "liking" of any new experience is doubtful. For with each growth in experience, something must be given up. The child cannot stay with his mother and be on his own at the same time. He cannot achieve the independence and adventure of walking, for instance, without giving up the comfort and luxury of being carried in his mother's arms or wheeled in his carriage. This element of giving up must also be remembered as we try to decide whether to wait and watch, to lead, or even to push our children a bit along the path of growing up.

#### ***No sudden signal***

The emphasis that has been put on the concept of readiness in recent years has lead to confusion for many conscientious parents who are truly puzzled at finding another new burden placed on their shoulders. Many of

them have the feeling that perhaps there is some kind of signal system attached to the child and that failing to see a green or red light they, the parents, have erred. The only signals, if they can be called that, are vague, subtle and unfortunately not always to be trusted. But let us remember that the baby does not give a signal and then suddenly leap from the crib and walk; the learning process is slow and gradual with downs as well as ups and, frequently, many unpleasant bumps and falls.

#### **Parents' readiness**

Moreover, the question of the child's readiness is closely bound up — and this is often forgotten — with that of the parents' readiness: they are two sides of the same coin. To let a child grow, or rather, to help him to do so, is not easy. There are many satisfactions for mother and father in the child's dependency and hence the parent also has to face a series of readjustments. Parents also sense the inevitable pain in store for them in watching the child gradually leave them, as he must if he is to grow up. In addition, they know that this process can be accomplished only if they actively participate in it. It has been said that the good mother, in a sense, works against her own interests; if she accomplishes her task, she has worked herself out of a job and the same is true for the father.

"Readiness," therefore, implies that both the parent and the child must be able to tolerate the anxiety inherent for each of them in every growth experience. Because the child imagines the parents to be all-powerful, it does not occur to him that they, too, may be fearful and apprehensive. So it is the adult who must assume the burden for his own anxiety as well as the pain in watching the child's groping to master each new step.

It is hard, also, for any mature parent to accept the often boring and constant demands of a growing child, and his seemingly insatiable needs cannot help but make the parent feel occasionally that the period of dependency is eternal. But for the child it

is helpful to have an understanding person standing by, one who can say, "I do understand what you are up against and I know it isn't easy. And I will love you and stay by you in spite of your bumbling and even your possible failure at this point." The feeling of power borrowed from the love and approval of his adults is so important that, it is now known, the baby may not even learn to walk without the encouragement of a warm human contact.

The parents who understand that fear, anger and protest are all inevitable and normal parts of the growing-up process, can more readily accept these signs of resistance in their child. They will also understand that the over-docile child, who always conforms without protest, is as much a cause for concern as the one who continually makes impossible demands. Parents need to recognize that a certain amount of anxiety is connected with their own growth, too. The parent who admits to *only* pleasure in watching and helping a child grow up (like the one who is constantly irritable or restrictive), is acting without awareness of all the feelings necessarily involved in the situation.

#### **Parents, too, are erratic**

There is one other point to be made about parents' readiness: it is often as uneven, erratic and slow to develop as the child's. We have learned to expect zig-zags and even backtracking in the child's course and we must likewise realize that the parent may have some difficulty in feeling full readiness for some new development in relationships or outward situations. As we cannot place too much reliance on the child's signals, so we must admit that it is not a mere matter of giving the parent a sign that readiness on his or her part is called for. There is the further complication that sometimes one parent may be in a better position, emotionally, than the other to assist the child with a new step. As we come to realize more and more that parents have to keep on growing, in their marriage and family relationships and in themselves, as individuals, these considerations begin to receive more attention.

Most parents try not to be over-concerned

if Joe does not develop physically as rapidly as Susan, the next-door baby of the same age. They have been helped by articles and books and pediatricians to understand that there are different rates of physical development related to many factors, the most important being the individual differences of each baby. Gesell, among others, has been helpful in establishing fairly flexible norms within which most children can be expected to fall in terms of development, both physical and emotional. Yet it is almost impossible not to feel that there is something quite special or "better" if the development tends to be rapid. Parents may be "right for the wrong reasons" about this. The child who walks early *may* be brighter than the child who matures more slowly physically. Or, he *may* be maturing emotionally more rapidly than many others in his own age group if he shows less reluctance to leave mother when he goes to nursery school. But this should not be used as the sole criterion for his ability to go out beyond his more infantile position.

The child's seeming independence may be related more to his mother's wish for him to help her boast to her neighbors of his grown-up ways (and he may be most intuitive about what pleases her), or it may be his developing pattern of handling his fears by denying that they exist. If his clinging to mother and refusing to enter the nursery group gives her the opportunity to say, "I tried to let him go but he wasn't ready" (because mother herself isn't prepared for this step in separation), it is not valid to judge the child's emotional maturity in terms of this particular behavior.

#### **Additional factors involved**

What the child's age is, what his previous experiences have been, what is important to the child and to his parents, all must be taken into account. If he clings to mother at 24 months, he may not at 26 or 28 months; and shouldn't it be possible to give him a small margin of a few months?

And so if David is too fearful and anxious to stay with a baby sitter or visit grandmother overnight this time, it need not mean

that this feeling will overwhelm him on the next attempt, or even, if he protests vigorously, that his anxiousness is too much for him to handle with help. The mother who learns to arrange many aspects of physical routine so that frustrations for the child are held to a minimum can also develop a sense of how much anxiety is tolerable for her particular child as he begins to move outside. She can, for instance, offer choices which do not present "success" or "failure" alternatives, but rather: "Shall we do it this way or would you like to try some other way?" If, moreover, she realizes that fear is a part of growth, she will be able to tolerate the anxiety necessary in growth. If she considers it only a sign of weakness, a display of "being scared" may be unbearable to her. If fathers and mothers overemphasize the pleasant experiences to be met with in the world, they will be as unrealistic as those who react mostly in terms of the difficult ones. But, if they understand that the giving up of infantile pleasures and dependency is the unavoidable price of maturity, they will accept this burden for themselves and their child and cushion his falls in his gradual steps toward his place in adult life. The rewards for not only tolerating but actively furthering his journey are the joys of watching successful growth. And parents can always remember that aiding in their child's growth means a development of their own resources which is in itself a profound satisfaction.

#### **CSAA publication notes**

Our new pamphlet, *The Controversial Problem of Discipline*, by Katherine M. Wolf of the Yale Child Development Center, has had many favorable reviews in a large number of professional journals as well as in newspapers.

However, that it has just been ordered by the United States Military Academy at West Point and the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, indicates a variety of outlets for this publication exceeding our most optimistic expectations.

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The new enlarged edition of *When Children Ask About Sex* was sold out within four months. A second printing has gone to press.

Readiness for reading is not reached by a set program, but by response to the child's interest when, and where, it is shown

## The road to reading

By Roma Gans

**T**oday's parent is often frankly worried about how his child will get along when he gets into first grade and starts his uphill climb as a reader. Such worries and concerns are understandable and should not be brushed off. Indeed, it is rather surprising to find that there are still so many unworried, unruffled parents when one considers the tone of some of the advice given direct to parents or quoted in newspapers.

At a parents' meeting this fall, a mother came up after the general discussion to talk privately to the speaker. She rather timidly stated her problem: her four-and-a-half-year-old child, who wanted to go to school this fall when his older brother of six started, had come to her with pencil and paper saying, "Write my name here." The mother said, "I was afraid I'd do the wrong thing, so I got him started on something else. If he asks me again, what should I do?"

Here is a perfectly normal situation: a child eager to start a new venture puts a perfectly sensible request to his mother. But because of the fears which had been sown in the mother's mind, she withholds a common-sense response. Why not show the child how to write, much as one shows him how to open a chest drawer, and then give him a

chance to explore this new experience? He may be fascinated by all its possibilities and concentrate on it for some time, or he may quickly drop it to go on to something else, satisfied because he received assistance when he especially wanted it. Since he was not turned away, slighted or ignored, he is now free to stay by, or drop, his new venture. This is exactly how he has learned to walk, to talk, to notice, to remember and to keep on making new discoveries and adding to his skills and knowledge.

Parents more than anyone else guide a child's growth in the use of that fundamental tool, language, and most of them do a mighty fine job of it. I have yet to hear a parent ask, "Is it all right to let him say *definitely*?" if the child wants to use this word as other members of the family do—or try out any other long word. Such a question would seem ridiculous, for we take it for granted that our children will take on our vocabulary and way of speaking, just as in the course of daily living with us they learn to turn on the water, tune in on a favorite TV program and help themselves to food at the table.

So, too, the child learns to help himself with reading. He asks an older member of

the family to read to him, or inquires, "What does it say?" when a message is handed to his father. If he lives comfortably as a real family member in the household, he knows in which book one looks for a telephone number and in which for a recipe. He also hears references to newspapers, magazines and books, and sees people reading them. Signs of all kinds catch his eye. Not only words, but single letters intrigue him. In short, he is living in a reading world. One might ask, how can he *help* acquiring an interest in reading and an eagerness to begin to master this tool for himself, as he has done with drawing his bath water, dressing and undressing, eating, climbing and discovering what actions will bring certain responses from playmates and adults?

Many normal, mentally limber youngsters will only busy themselves about "reading" to the extent of enjoying stories that are read to them, taking fleeting glances at picture books and demanding adult attention to their questions about signs and notices. Some may show no eagerness to form actual letters, preferring to use paints, crayons and pencils to express their ideas without benefit of alphabetical symbols. Others want to be more specific. They like to call our attention to what they have learned: "That's an R-like in my name." "That says Danger." "I can make an O and a T." Some insist upon finding for themselves the book they want to read, and holding it, or pointing to certain words or familiar phrases. At five or thereabouts, many youngsters have acquired quite a store of these learnings. Some they may keep and add on to, others they will forget as they move to other more gripping adventures.

#### ***Neither to ignore nor overpraise***

Such learn-as-you-live experiences are normal. Many are retained as part of the child's equipment and are exercised every now and then for his own or his parents' satisfaction. That, too, is as normal as the child's eagerness to have an adult stand back and watch while he unzips his coat, just to demonstrate his skill. To ignore or minimize evi-

dences of such growth is to chill the warmth of his feeling of success. To be overenthusiastic, however, and to ask him to parade his sprouting learning to friends and relatives, may derail his satisfaction from learning and switch him to the track of a show-off.

Many talkative four- to five-year olds, particularly if they spend much time closely supervised by adults, learn to read from simple books. These youngsters, when they get to kindergarten, may slowly but surely be drawn into the fascination of working and playing with their pals. They may drop all interest in their reading skill and even show signs of losing a rather well-established beginning.

#### ***The zig-zag course***

This may be all to the good, yet it is sometimes hard for parents to accept, as it seems to them like a return to more immature behavior. On the contrary, it is fortunate that so many youngsters seem to have the desire to be good builders, dumpers, inspectors and cops with others of their age, rather than to be star readers. Such a feeling of companionship contributes vitally to the courage and persistence which youngsters need for later growth in all school work.

If a child starts early to notice letters, wants to write and enjoys long periods of looking at books, the temptation is to expect uninterrupted progress along these lines, even where new social challenges enter into the picture. In such a situation, the child may develop a resistance to reading and to those who push him toward it. If his ability to play with letter blocks, or to spell and write becomes a matter of such family pride that he finds himself the center of a publicity campaign, he may find satisfaction in learning later on only if it leads to lots of praise. Hence the good fortune of the child whose parents notice that he is growing, but allow reading to remain in the hopper with all the other learnings as just one of the many elements of growth.

A closer look at the process of learning to read reveals that unlike the progress which a child can actually see or hear or feel as he

learns to walk, talk, build with blocks, ride a tricycle, etc., reading is a silent, quiet task, slowly mastered and hard to measure. Even to a rapid learner, there must be many moments of frustration. Therefore, how important for a child to feel reassured by a warm, friendly home climate where his ups and downs in trying out new things and remembering the old are taken as a matter of course. Add to this kind of home atmosphere the chance to have fun, to learn to take new hurdles with other children his own age, and he has the makings of the self-confidence he needs to tackle this difficult job.

#### **The best "program"**

Actually, all such relaxed and helpful day-to-day relationships in home, nursery school and neighborhood add up to the best kind of so-called "reading readiness" program. Look at what is happening to the child: he is growing up unafraid to ask and to try out new things; he is getting frequent assurance that he is all right, a growing "big shot"; he is continuing to notice more of the world about him—people, things and ways of doing things; he is acquiring a vocabulary, and he also is learning at times to be a listener. In addition to all these essential learnings he is developing a liking for new adventures, a satisfaction in hearing stories told or read, and a fondness for his own books.

It is important to remember that when a child begins to recognize a few letters and words, this is not a sign of "reading readiness" to *him*! This is the real article. Therefore, it is more correct to refer to such accomplishments as Sandra's mother did when Sandra, upon her first visit to the kindergarten, marched right up to a blackboard and carefully drew the letter S on the board. "She knows some things about reading," said her mother, "such as letters and some words." To Sandra this was recognition of her real power. To make her feel that she was just taking a preliminary step ("I think she's ready for reading") might have discouraged or at least confused her. A five- or six-year old, overhearing comments about his *reading readiness* may feel that the read-

ing steps which he has already taken are not recognized or considered important. This is like telling an adult who is slowly wending his way round the golf course for the first time that he is "getting ready to play golf." He may be a horrible dud at it, but to him this is the first stage of the real thing.

There are some general suggestions which may be tried out in working with youngsters up to five and six. First we can help the child to have a happy, satisfying time in taking hold of his world; and next, we can try to see that he is left with a good feeling about any encounter he may have with the various aspects of reading and learning to read. These two general suggestions should really top all reading readiness advice for homes and schools.

When a child begins to ask questions and wants help this should be given in as reasonable and matter-of-fact manner as any other kind of aid. His responses should be noticed, favorably received, but not unduly stressed. If he gradually and comfortably begins to read words, snatches from a favorite book and labels and captions, such progress should be taken "in stride" by all around him. Similarly, if he is a well, busy child, who shows little interest in books or writing, accept such behavior, too, as normal. He may spurt forward suddenly, or be one of those steady growers who learns things well—but later.

#### **Attitudes in kindergarten**

It is fortunate if a child can go to a kindergarten where this kind of attitude toward learning to read prevails. If tensions and worries surround a so-called reading readiness program in kindergarten, the child will need to be assured and reassured at home. One youngster, scarcely five, came home distressed because he couldn't recognize his name *Jerry* on his locker, which was near a locker labelled *Jeremy*. When his mother discovered his plight she said, "No wonder you get mixed up—they're so much alike. But your name has five letters, and *Jeremy's* has six." She printed each name carefully while *Jerry* looked on and counted the

letters. This small bit of assistance helped him to feel just as adequate as the other children who were able to locate their lockers by recognizing the labels.

Similarly, when a child in first grade seems uneasy or unhappy about not being able to meet some demand, a little help—sometimes regular help—at home seems appropriate. Such help, given with the aim of easing tension, and repeated as often as a youngster seems to want it, is invaluable in building courage and self-confidence. The father of Jimmie, a boy who was nearing the age of seven in first grade and not reading a bit, made a wonderful statement at a parents' meeting recently. A worried mother had commented: "everything is easy if your youngster learns to read in first grade, but what if he doesn't?" "When Jimmie and I talk things over," this father answered her, "I tell him, 'You're a good kid. You'll learn to read just as you've learned lots of things. And I'll help you.'" Jimmie, at seven, may be reading signs, writing his name and picking out a few words in a book in much the same way a younger child does. But as long as he feels he is respected, and able to learn things — and that his family feels satisfied with him — he, too, will very likely grow into a reader to whom this skill gives help and pleasure.

#### **Resistance and non-interest**

There are some children who may develop a strong resistance to reading which even an understanding home and school find difficult to overcome. Special help for such children now is available in many schools and clinics. Specialists who understand children's emotions as well as the difficulties met in learning to read often help a youngster over the hurdle. Then there are the children who make a certain amount of progress, but never "take to" reading. One theory about youngsters who never turn their talents to reading is that they are not particularly intrigued by this abstract verbal business, but find satisfaction in other activities — in fact, some successful adults in our midst may have started out as such children. Of course, less conspicuous, but far

more prevalent, are those who face learning to read as a job to be done, acquire a high degree of skill, then practically never read — if they can avoid it. This observation should intrigue us more than it does. Is it possible for the poor non-interested reader to lead a happy, successful life?

#### **Reading should be fun**

Without attempting here to answer that question, let us keep in mind the fact that learning to read should be fun. Most children will find it so if they grow up believing in themselves, and are introduced in home and early school years to the wonderful riches of children's books. If, in addition, they see the older children and adults around them getting use and pleasure from the magic symbols we call letters, then learning to read will more surely become an achievement within their grasp.

#### **do you have QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CHILD?**

The Counseling Service of the Child Study Association of America offers a service to average parents with everyday questions about their children. . . .

Just as you consult your physician about your child's physical health, you can look for help with his emotional health through a short series of interviews with the Counseling Service of the Child Study Association of America.

As a parent, you can — through personal consultation with a skilled counselor — learn better to understand your child and how family relationships can be strengthened.

You can work out the temporary difficulties which may arise from one of the phases of a child's development such as weaning, sleeping problems, school adjustment, dating in adolescence, etc.

You may learn how to deal with important family changes like death, separation from parents, illness, birth of a new baby. Positive aspects of family life are strengthened and pressures are relieved when handled with professional guidance.

Individual fees are arranged based on the income and size of the family. Appointments may be made by telephoning the Child Study Association, BUTterfield 8-6000, from 9-5, Monday through Friday.

# Readiness for adolescent relationships

How pleasant it would be to write this article if there were a systematized body of scientific knowledge available to answer the many questions and problems which naturally trouble parents of average adolescents today. Then it would be possible to say what is the appropriate age for dating, what to think about the adolescent who does not seek the company of the opposite sex, how to understand the one who is completely preoccupied with the opposite sex, what to think of going steady from an early age, of adolescent conformity, etc., etc. Perhaps science might even have an answer for the vexatious problem of full sexual relations in adolescence.

But it must be admitted that such a body of scientific knowledge does not yet exist. Despite the vast number of valuable findings on all phases of adolescence (dissocial behavior, neurotic difficulties, learning troubles, cultural variations in adolescence), we are still not ready to give scientifically valid answers to many of the practical questions which beset parents.

Moreover the physician specializing in personality disorders can only say (and that only occasionally) whether a given activity, attitude, or way of life is a sign of mental health or illness. Even where such

a diagnosis can be made, we must realize that health and disease comprise only one of the many values involved in any life problem. Moral judgment is certainly another.

However a person may base his values, whether on revealed religion, or philosophy, or acceptance of traditional standards, he frequently measures a given action by these values. Health and moral values do not necessarily coincide; nor can one be substituted for the other. At times they may even conflict: what is moral may be unhealthy and vice versa. For instance, going into battle, to defend one's ideals, is obviously dangerous to physical health and at times to mental health also. Professional contact with mentally ill people may, in time, cause predisposed individuals to develop psychiatric disorders; yet the activity in itself is highly commendable. On a less drastic scale, one may cite the individual who has totally repressed his aggressive impulses and converted them into social altruism. While, as a reformer, he will benefit "social health," he may be injuring his own.

In all of these examples, it can be argued that failure to perform these various activities would lead to feelings of guilt and,

therefore, to possible mental disorder. This may be true, but the examples are given only to demonstrate that we dare not, in Pollyanna-like fashion, loosely assume that mental health and morality are synonymous.

#### **Ideals and impulses conflict**

Particularly in adolescence, the conflict between impulse gratification and ideals may become especially acute, not only for the adolescent himself but for his parents. As long as the child is small, adults are in more or less general agreement about what is right and wrong for him to do, and can exert considerable control over the extent to which he satisfies his sexual and aggressive urges. With the advent of adolescence, this situation is somewhat changed. There is less agreement about what is right for the adolescent, and at the same time the young person has much more power to satisfy his needs by himself.

If we realize, then, that mental health is only one criterion among others in considering the problems of boy-girl relationships, and also remember the incomplete state of scientific knowledge, it will be admissible to give some opinions, based on clinical experience, which may help parents to form their own conclusions.

Let us return now to the topic indicated by the title. What do we mean by it? We mean simply that the most important element in this particular kind of readiness consists in a true yearning of the sexes for each other, an urge to be together. Whereupon we ask ourselves, what more can be said about readiness? Boy meets girl; girl meets boy. The only question to be answered is how far they should go in satisfying their natural urges.

#### **A complex equation**

The answer is not so obvious, for there are many other factors that complicate this urge: the general development of the personality, the sense of one's own identity, the young person's increasing indepen-

dence and wide range of interests. We know from numerous studies of adolescents that full sexual activity is often undertaken for extrosexual motives. This may be especially true for girls but the percentage of adolescents of both sexes, seen under clinical conditions, who derive little pleasure from this activity is astonishingly high.

Only with considerable caution is it possible to transfer impressions gained from clinical material to average youngsters. Yet people are people, and what is true for one group may be true to a limited extent for another. With this reservation, it is relevant to point out that a considerable number of young girls describe sexual intercourse as unpleasurable, or as a neutral experience which they "got nothing out of," even though they have engaged in it repeatedly. Boys on the other hand will usually answer that they enjoy intercourse.

In both cases it is necessary to scrutinize the answers critically. A girl may give the negative answer in order to minimize her feeling of guilt, and the boy the positive one to maximize his masculinity. Taking all this into consideration, one is still left with the impression that sexual relations in adolescence frequently do not give much pleasure.

#### **The power of taboos**

At first glance, the adult, remembering the impetus of his own adolescent sexual urges, is astonished at this conclusion. But when one bears in mind the inner and outer taboos weighing down on adolescent sexual intercourse, and the furtive circumstances under which it usually takes place, it is not at all surprising. The vigor of the sexual urge in adolescence is countered by equally strong feelings of guilt, whether conscious or unconscious.

The problem of sexual relations in adolescence is, therefore, not a simple one from any point of view. Since adolescence is the period when the *harmonious* integration of sexuality into the personality may best occur, the needs of the total person must be kept in mind. While knowledge

of potency is important, the adjustment to sexuality is more than a matter of physically successful intercourse. We can imagine an adolescent who, through repression of guilt feelings, finally becomes capable of sexual satisfaction. However, this is an unstable sexuality which may break down at a future date.

None of what I have said is meant as a justification for, or as a condemnation of, society's taboo on adolescent sexual intercourse. It is only meant to demonstrate the need for seeing the problem in relation both to the whole personality and to the social structure.

#### ***Actions and feelings differ***

It is important to consider whether in other respects also the chronological "adolescent" is always really in the adolescent stage of inward growth. Many of us, in considering this problem, take the *action for the feeling*. As long as the boy or girl is dating or necking or is engaged in any one of the numerous activities which we consider part of adolescence, we feel reassured that he or she is proceeding according to schedule. This may be far from true. Such changes can be more external than internal. One sees both boys and girls who participate fully in the activities of the group, but who get very little out of them and are indeed frightened by them.

For example, the present-day insistence on frequent social contacts with the opposite sex (a reaction to previous educational practices, which separated boys and girls so rigidly) has found expression in coeducational schools and camps. In the younger adolescents this has, at times, led to a premature imitation of the older adolescents and has launched them into a competitive struggle for dates for which they neither are prepared nor have any great inner desire.

Adolescents living in the "civilized" state of society not only have to curb their impulses but also have the problem of trying to know what their impulses really are. The physical changes of puberty and the

apparent social changes of high school life are no necessary indication that the corresponding inner emotional changes of adolescence have taken place.

The parent trying to help an adolescent son or daughter must, therefore, be aware of the psychological growth of his children, must have observed the changes in them over the years and appreciate the indications of personality development. With this kind of intuitive knowledge, parents are better able to give their adolescent children counsel which is in accordance with their whole pattern of development. Unfortunately, this method, which involves knowledge of one's children as individuals, is too frequently replaced by unselective book-knowledge of "The Adolescent." This attitude is reflected in such expressions as: "He's passing through a phase," "the awkward stage," "that's typically adolescent," "grow up," "be your age" etc., etc.

#### ***Undervaluation of these years***

Such a stereotyped attitude springs from a deep-rooted undervaluation of adolescence and an equally deep-rooted overvaluation of adulthood. Adults usually view the years of adolescence essentially as preparatory for adulthood; and one scientific writer has bluntly stated that "it is the business of the adolescent to cease being an adolescent." Is it?

I think not. For this attitude implies that adolescence has no inherent value in itself and that adolescent activities are to be viewed primarily as either contributing to the achievement of adult aims or as transient excrescences with nuisance value only.

Perhaps it is a matter of personal choice whether one adopts this philosophy or one wherein adolescence has an absolute value of its own. The former, however, leads one into certain difficulties. If adolescence is to be judged primarily by its preparatory value, then one must consider adulthood as a preparation for old age. Thus each period of our entire lives be-

comes something to be "lived through," and one can hardly see the point of the journey at all.

Another consequence of this philosophy is the premature encroachment of adulthood upon adolescence, a tendency which seems to be increasingly noticeable in our society. For example, I think it is this encroachment which—in part at least—accounts for the recent phenomenon of young boys and girls "going steady" from the early years of adolescence.

We may question whether the adolescents' need to conform to their peers' standards, about which so much has been written, is really the entire motivation behind these relationships. Is not this excessive conformity perhaps part of premature involvement in adulthood? Isn't conformity a conspicuous aspect of the present adult American scene?

Or consider the hectic pace of adult life in our country. Is it any different in the adolescent years? A study of a typical, small, midwestern town showed that high school pupils were so busy that their time was disposed of for weeks in advance. Do we not see here a loss of differentiation between adulthood and adolescence? Many forces—social and individual—appear to be at work which tend to short-circuit the

dynamic mental and emotional changes of adolescence.

A concept of organic growth from within rather than of forced growth from without is needed to give us better guidance in this whole matter. It is obviously not easy to absorb and use such a concept in our confused present-day society. But much as we may all regret the passing of an era when growing up was apparently so much more automatic, the present-day reality is the one which confronts us.

A relatively modern feature of our present adult society is the constant emphasis put on efficiency, competence, smoothness of operation, doing a good job, etc. Such concepts indicate our preoccupation with work and derive from external reality. They have become invested with extraordinary prestige; we all of us want "to do a good job," and even the sight of a shuffling, lackadaisical person fills us with distaste. Furthermore, the ideals of efficiency and success which are appropriate for the conquest of external reality, have begun to dominate individual relationships, where this kind of standard of measurement is dangerous.

Typical examples from psychoanalytic practice illustrate the invasion of this efficiency ideal into the field of relationships.

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When a patient is asked how he or she is getting along in married life, one frequently hears the answer: "My marriage is *successful*, (unsuccessful), my relationships are *successful*." When asked about the children: "I am (or am not) doing a *good job* with the children. . . . I am *handling* the children well or badly."

When we stop and think, the appropriate answer to the first question is: "I am happy (or unhappy) with my wife (husband)." To say that my marriage is "successful," is as incongruous as saying that my business is happy. A business is not happy nor can a marriage be successful in the true sense of the word, unless one looks upon marriage as a business. Similar reflections apply to the second response; a parent is not an executive. It may be objected that the use of the word *successful* for happy is accidental and without significance. I do not think so; I believe it to be a reflection of deep changes in social attitudes.

I do not intend to enter here into problems of modern marriage and child-rearing, and I have only used these examples to point up the subtle infiltration of adult mechanical standards into our emotional life. In this connection one must realize that adolescence is not only a process directed outward toward an increasing mastery of external reality. It is also an inner process, during which the adolescent has to experience the world within himself which now, because of his time of life, is assuming, and should assume, vast importance.

#### *A denial of development*

Insofar as we adults think of life in terms of "doing a *good job*," we are subtly denying opportunities for full emotional development to the adolescent, and are bringing boy-girl relationships prematurely into the orbit of adult realistic considerations. Dating viewed primarily as a preparation for adult courtship is a case in point. Dating thus becomes expensive and highly ritualized with corsage, taxi, dinner, dance,

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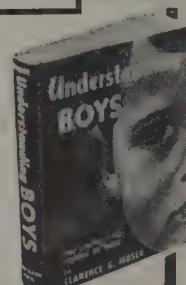
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all proceeding in fixed order. One senses in young people the inappropriate anxiety and the displaced focusing on aspects of courtship which might be tolerable and appropriate for the adult.

A recent article on the high cost of dating reveals that the average sum spent on "formal" college dates is thirty dollars, while about eighty dollars is needed to cover a college week-end. In accounting for these large sums, the author lists certain "musts" such as corsage, dinner, taxis, and so on. But we adults, both as students of the problem and as parents, should ask ourselves: why are these items "musts"? What does it mean to have to fulfill these "musts"?

As adults, we have accustomed ourselves to accepting the demands of convention and to a necessary curtailment of our emotional life, not only because of social pressures, but because over the years we have chanced upon a certain way of life which has become relatively fixed. But when adolescent boys and girls are prematurely

"set," they are forced permanently to deny that large part of their emotional possibilities which belongs properly to those years.

As there is a time for laughter and a time for tears, so too for each age there are appropriate ways of experiencing life. Adolescents need opportunities to experience themselves, to find out what they are like, in terms of feelings. We consider it wasteful to race a motor or let it idle, but it is only inefficient if you want to get somewhere. Perhaps the adolescent should be permitted to race his engine if he likes, or let it idle disengaged from the gears of adult ways. Should he fail to experience the emotional changes of adolescence, he will pass more or less directly from childhood to adulthood, bypassing the gamut of these experiences and turning out to be a pseudo-mature adult—an increasingly frequent type today.

The pursuit of the sexual drives in their broadest sense is directly involved in the process of self-discovery and self-integration. The sexual demands that the boy makes on the girl and vice versa lead to a sharpening of the outlines of the personality itself, as well as the differentiation between boy and girl. This defining process can be of value to the adolescent only when it springs from a corresponding inner need and not from living up to adult ideas of what an adolescent should be.

#### *The importance of friendships*

While we are talking of heterosexual interests, a few words about friendship between young people of the same sex may not be amiss. Friendships (I purposely do not use the overworked word relationships) appear to be an essential ingredient of adolescence. They really appear for the first time at this age and contribute powerfully to the development of the personality. (Here, too, we often fall into the error of viewing adolescence as essentially preparatory, and speak condescendingly of school-girl or -boy friendships, yet many of our most intensive experiences with members of the same sex stem from

this period and are never again repeated.) In line with the increasing range of interests of the adolescent, he or she now forms friendships with older and younger boys or girls. In this way opportunities for passive and active relations arise which are of great importance in personality development. With our zeal for avoiding the restrictions of a previous era, we should not go too far in filling the adolescent's time with contact with the opposite sex, but ought to bear in mind the need for close involvement with members of the same sex.

#### *Irresponsibility no answer*

On rereading this plea that adolescents be allowed to be themselves and go forward at their own pace, it occurs to me that it might be considered as an argument for indulgence and freedom from responsibility. Nothing of the sort is meant. We will not help the adolescent by such laxness. Indeed, some of the attitudes previously mentioned are themselves connected with excessive indulgence and freedom. For instance, if the grownup views adolescence as the threshold of adulthood, he or she may well say: "Oh, let him have his fun. It doesn't matter if he spends pretty freely now (\$30 for a date); he'll have to buckle down soon enough." But if the adolescent is to experience these years of his life in the appropriate manner, it may very well matter.

Nor do I mean, by the premature infiltration of adult ideals, that the adult should keep his opinions to himself so as not to impose his ideas. Such a procedure surrounds the adolescent with an artificial vacuum. Just as he defines his personality through give and take with companions of various ages, so too he can benefit from an exchange with his parents. The adolescent is entitled to know his parents' views on problems involved in the boy-girl relationships. How far the parent will go in insisting that the young person adopt his standards is a matter of the individual parent's philosophy.

Certainly parents must have their own ideas of right and wrong in the field of adolescent heterosexual relationships, and also be well aware of the points where they are unclear, hesitant and in doubt. The extent to which they communicate their ideas and doubts to adolescents will depend very much on their intuitive estimate of their children's maturity.

Because of the flux and clash of moral ideas in our present age, many people seek the reassurance of positive standards elsewhere, and go to the physician for commandments. They hope the problem will be solved if they can be guided by an answer to the question: is a given activity healthy or unhealthy? As already indicated, such answers are no substitute for ideas of one's own and are a meager diet to offer one's adolescent children.

A last word is necessary about the extent to which a parent can help his growing adolescent in the face of social forces which oppose healthy growth. Let us, for example, consider the ideal of glamor as fostered by the movies and their sister industry, advertising. Glamor, as viewed by these businesses, becomes a matter of technology. With the proper deodorant, teeth straightening, "uplift" garments, weight reduction, etc., etc. a girl becomes glamorous: the application of the belt-conveyor system to the problem of individuality. How many are influenced by this ideology? There is no proven answer to that question, but I believe its influence should not be underestimated.

#### **Strong forces to combat**

There are many examples of the shallow view of personality as something to be achieved externally. It appears to me that parents today are confronted by social forces in some ways possibly stronger than the influence they individually can exert—forces inimical to the creative blossoming of personality during adolescence. It is astounding, when one thinks of all the fuss that is made today over "teen-agers" and "youth" that we still need to enquire how

receptive, fundamentally, is our society to adolescence?

The question is important because parents' efforts face a limiting factor in these inhibiting social forces. They can go just so far in their individual efforts to help their adolescent sons and daughters with their relations with the opposite sex; a further significant advance can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of parents.

#### ***The parents' contribution***

Research, combining the insights from various fields, which would help us describe social norms for creative living during adolescence is much needed, and could be stimulated and supported by parents working together through community channels. But even without waiting for the results of such research, parents themselves can scrutinize adolescent folkways through the lens of common sense. Such topics as dating, going steady, scholastic work, extracurricular activity, and especially the intangible emotional atmosphere surrounding these activities, are all legitimate subjects for parental discussion. Some may object and say that in their day all this analysis was unnecessary. The hard reality, however, is that times have changed. We are living in a society which engenders many new doubts, uncertainties and pressures, and it is important to remember that the contradictions in this society impinge with especial and disturbing force on the adolescent. Research findings into the effect of such contradictions will, one hopes, indicate steps toward some social reorganization which will minimize *unrealistic* anxiety, stresses and strains. This prospect need not cause parents uneasiness. Rather, they may feel some optimism that orderly social changes, attuned to the psycho-social needs of young people, will permit a more harmonious meshing of the adolescent process with the social structure.

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# When children face social issues

At what age are youngsters ready  
for involvement in the  
social questions of today?

By William W. Wattenberg

A child's contact with social problems is gained largely through two avenues: the talk he hears in his home and the material brought to him via the various news channels of our society—television, radio, moving pictures and printed pages. Of these, during the early years the most potent influence is what happens in the family.

Realizing this, many parents feel a bit uneasy. Some, desiring to protect young children from what they see as the overwhelming insecurities of a harsh world, make a practice of saving important "grown-up talk" for discussion after the children's bedtime. If a question is too pressing to be delayed, they send the youngsters off to play somewhere out of earshot, or even resort to a code of cryptic language.

At the opposite extreme are parents who are so imbued with a particular point of view which is important to them, that they begin almost from infancy to instruct their children in facts and attitudes about complex issues. These young folks may learn to parrot their parents' favorite epigrams about peace, race relations, political issues or taxes. Often the youngsters give a precocious appearance of having mastered high-order abstractions, when in fact they have only a confused idea as to what the words mean.

Trying to stake out a path between these

two extremes, psychologists often tell parents, "Wait until the child is ready. Then, as soon as he is ready, answer his questions at the level on which he asks them." This sounds simple and obvious. Yet, in practice, the advice too often turns out to be vague.

The basic question seems to be: "When is 'ready'? How do you know? What are the signs?" Usually, it is assumed that there is a simple and clear signal of readiness. When a child is ready, he will ask questions. Sometimes, indeed, it happens just exactly that way. Sometimes, however, readiness is more difficult to judge.

The readiness of a child to put his mind to any social question depends in part on how real the influence of that problem is in relation to his own family. Thus, to a five-year old whose father is in Korea, war can have a reality and a concreteness it would not have for a ten-year old whose father is in a stable occupation in no way touched by war or war production. A child living in a family having a fixed income may hear rising prices so constantly discussed by his parents that this problem has real meaning for him. To take an extreme example, a bus strike may arouse more thought in a child whose family owns no car than in a boy or girl in a two-car family. Similarly, a steel strike will have a less immediate impact on most children's lives than a milk drivers' strike.

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The situation, then, provides in itself one indication that there may be a certain degree of readiness to discuss or think about social questions. If a child's life is directly and obviously influenced by a problem, there is need for his adults to give him some explanation of it in a way that he can understand. At first thought, we might assume that in so obvious a case the youngster would be asking questions. Yet, this is not always true.

#### Avoiding touchy spots

Children are sensitive to the feelings of their grownups. Many, when they sense that an area is one which pains mother or father, act considerately: they cease to probe the touchy spot. Rather than seek answers to their questions at home, they may search outside. Basically, this is an unhealthy development. Too often, frightened fantasies provide a distorted picture of what is involved. The child's life may be poisoned by an interconnected mass of insecurities centered about the not-to-be-looked-at question. This can function much as a focus of infection in his emotional life.

For parents, the fundamental question is not whether to open discussion. That must be done. Rather, the main issue is the kind and complexity of detail with which the social problem is to be approached. Initially, a safe guide is to use an approach as similar as possible to that used when talking about other issues that are less emotionally charged. Then, once the youngster knows he can explore the area, his own queries are likely to be a safe guide. Here, as in sex education, it is wise not to volunteer details until they are requested.

In many cases, parents want children to see a connection between their own lives and various social issues. They take the position that no life is isolated from any other. As they see the world, all human beings are interrelated. Therefore, any child's life is influenced by all events. The only question they see is the speed with which this realization can be driven home.

Accordingly, they tend to force interest.

The chances are that children growing up in homes where the adults are sensitive to social issues will themselves develop such interests at a relatively early age. Indeed, the greatest danger is that, lacking faith in that eventuality, parents will push children too hard. If this is done, there is the risk that during the revolt phases of pre-adolescence and adolescence, the child may develop an antipathy to the very matters upon which he feels his grownups have harped. Social sensitivity may then join the violin and ballet slippers on the rubbish heap of disowned parental ambitions.

For this type of situation, the question of readiness may be answered in the same way as the question of readiness for reading, bicycle-riding and sex education: adults are best advised to let the youngster live according to his own needs and interests. This may well mean he will spend most of his days outside school hours in play with other children the same age. When he is ready to turn to other matters, he will begin to raise questions.

#### **When no questions are asked**

But, it will be argued, what if the questions never come? Isn't this merely a psychological equivalent of isolationism? The parent worried about this too often forgets that children overhear what grownups discuss. Part of every youngster's normal experience includes being present when big people are conversing about topics with which the child has no immediate interest. Sooner or later, however, these mysterious subjects begin to make some sense. Or perhaps some item seen on television reminds the child of something mother or father talked about. Then, if parents are around enough of the time, an opening question finally is asked. If it is answered for just what it asks, more will come in good time.

Isn't this relying too much on chance? Not at all. In most communities the air is so alive with social questions that the child's failure to notice them is a definite

sign that there is no readiness. Television, radio and newspapers present many questions. Listen, for example, to Captain Video and see how much is made of issues like peace, liberty and fair play. Look at newspaper headlines over an average week; only a blind child can avoid at least recognizing terms like Communism, civil rights and strikes.

For those children whose parents are active in dealing with social questions, there is another force that tends to create interest. The parents go out to attend meetings and work on committees. Some planning sessions are apt to take place in the home, too, from which the child may be excluded. All this calls for an explanation. First the youngster asks, "Where are you going?" Then, "Why do you have to go to that old meeting?" or "Why are all those people coming to our house?"

The honest answer is a brief explanation of what the meeting is about. A long speech on the whole issue is not required. Remember the question is why the parent

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is going away, or why the child cannot play in the family living room on a certain evening—not what are the merits and demerits of a particular viewpoint. However it is easy to say simply, "So that our city will be a better place for you," or "So that more people can have good medical care for their children." The "Why?" and "How?" of these answers may be a while in coming. But, as surely as day dawns, they will come.

#### **How about "leading questions"?**

A long period of patient waiting for those first questions and for the later, more sharply aimed ones, is often more than parents can take. There are few feelings as frustrating as holding oneself in check, doing nothing, while the world goes groggily to the damnation bow-wows. Accordingly, despite all the advice of all the experts, some parents will try to force the pace just a little. Surely a few leading questions will do no harm. Maybe all the pump of curiosity needs is a little discreet priming. Maybe. The temptation is seductive as can be. However, it is well here to recognize the similarity between this type of "priming" and that by which over-anxious parents cause their children to become feeding problems. They start by trying to get just one more spoonful swallowed. Resisting the pressure and sensing the grownup's anxiety, the youngster acts in a negative fashion. Similarly, parental anxiety about recognition of social issues may boomerang. The best and surest strategy remains that of letting a child have a happy, secure, childish childhood and relying upon maturity to make him want to be like the grownups who protected and nurtured him.

#### **The flustered answer**

This is only one side of the picture. On the other side are the parents who are taken aback by a first question. Social issues often being tricky, they give a "hush-up" or flustered answer. This may be a tip-off to the child that he has ventured in-

to uncomfortable territory. Must the parent now wait to undo the damage until another question is asked? Perhaps there will be no such second chance. This is too real a risk to be denied. Probably the best tactic here calls for taking the bull by the horns. As soon as possible, it would be a good idea for the parent to reopen the question and give the reply which upon fuller consideration seems wise.

There is another problem which arises from the strategy of waiting for children to take the lead in asking questions. As in sex education, may they not sometimes fail to ask for information which they need? For instance, it is necessary for parents to prepare a girl for menstruation and a boy for seminal emissions before they have the first experience. The damage resulting from waiting for a question that never comes is greater than the risk of volunteering discussion ahead of time.

#### **Clear and present possibilities**

The basic issue in this type of situation may be the reality of the impending event for which the child should be prepared. Sex maturation is a clear case. Even if no question is asked, the parents' statement, "Soon this will happen to you," is sufficient to create interest.

Thus, for example, the parents of a Negro, Mexican, Jewish or other minority-group child may want to prepare a youngster to cope with discrimination. Circumstances may emphasize the issue, as where a Negro child raised in New York is to accompany the family on a visit to grandparents in Georgia.

Other developments may offer equally clear and present possibilities. Thus, if a minority-group family buys a home in a hitherto restricted residential area, a child from one of the old-timer homes will hear bitter remarks from many adults, and his parents may want to immunize him against the poison of prejudice. Likewise, as a labor-management dispute heads toward the show-down stage, or international tensions build toward a crisis, parents may



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN. A picture-book story of the beloved president. Especially prepared for younger readers. Approved by the Child Study Association. Many color pictures. *For ages 6-9. \$1*

**At all bookstores. RANDOM HOUSE, 457 Madison Ave., N. Y.**

want to take the initiative in opening discussion.

In such a situation, two steps may be taken. First, the parent outlines for the child what is probably going to happen. At this point, all that is necessary is to arouse the youngster's interest. Then, if there is readiness, this initial explanation is absorbed and questions flow. If there is no genuine readiness, the explanation arouses no apparent reaction. However, the new situation described by the parent may at least stir an interest which otherwise would be dormant.

An analogy may make this process clear. In an emergency, a comparatively young child may be left to take care of a younger brother or sister. The fact that the emergency requires this arrangement may enable the child to muster resources of maturity that under normal circumstances would not be tapped. This does not mean that he is ready to take charge of his brother or sister day in and day out. There is here a readiness available only when circumstances require it.

#### **Guard reserves of maturity**

But let us be careful how we accept and use this readiness to rise to special occasions; it is all too easy for the over-enthusiastic adult to convince himself that every situation is a special occasion. Vivid illustrations of this delusion were furnished on every hand during the 1950 period of the civilian defense movement, when hysterical grownups in many cities were eager to give children instructions for meeting remote atom bomb contingencies.

If children are forced to draw on reserves of maturity too often they may become hardened and cynical. This is the familiar story of the boy who cried "Wolf," only the roles are reversed. It is the grown-up who cries "Wolf," and the children who learn not to respond.

In summary, then, we may say that under ordinary circumstances children's awareness of social problems and readiness to talk about them will show itself in the

same way that readiness appears in regard to arithmetic, dancing and baseball. Surrounded by a culture in which social issues are of paramount importance, and growing up among adults who talk about them, children will begin to think and to question in their own way, at their own good time. If such requests for help are met at the child's own level, this interest will grow and develop.

However, it is necessary sometimes to step ahead, without waiting for children to set the pace. This is indicated when social problems have an immediate and direct effect on a child's life or when there is a clear probability that there will be such direct impact in the near future. At such times, adults will have to take the initiative. Under such circumstances, children often reveal a reserve of maturity and readiness from which they can be helped to gain personal security. This reserve is precious and should be kept intact against emergencies.

There is much evidence to show that the children who have been allowed to live fully as children are the ones who grow up to be courageous and responsible people. And these are the qualities which offer our best hope for dealing with social problems in any era.

#### **Informative report**

A highly informative report entitled "Biennial Report on Community, Family and Child Welfare" has just been issued by the United Nations. Individual reports from many countries around the globe furnish summary information on a wide range of subjects such as family counseling services, family allowances, family life education, child and youth welfare, mental health, education and recreation. Obtainable from Columbia University Press, New York, at \$3.00.

#### **Greeting cards**

The Christmas greeting cards shown opposite may be obtained from the UNICEF Greeting Card Fund, United Nations, New York, for \$1.00 per box of ten cards.



## All the world's children play

These greeting cards, being sold for the benefit of UNICEF, show clockwise:

Kite Flying in Peru, Hop-Scotch in Pakistan, Blind Man's Buff in Greece, Hide and Seek in the Middle East, Greased Pole in the Philippines.





# Books of the year for children

Selected by the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association

These titles have been selected from the children's books published during the calendar year 1953. For convenience they have been arranged in age groupings, but many have a far wider appeal than could be indicated. Books of outstanding quality are starred (\*). Titles designated (†) are books which illuminate today's world for children.

This list can be purchased from the Association for 25¢. All the books listed are on exhibit at Association headquarters, 132 East 74th St., N.Y.C.



## Collections

\***A BOOK OF THE SEASONS.** An anthology made and decorated by Eve Garnett. Bentley. \$2.75. Delicate pictures with verse deftly selected from many sources flow together to trace the course of the seasons in their many moods. (8-11)

**THE MOON IS SHINING BRIGHT AS DAY.** Selected and with an introduction by Ogden Nash. Lippincott. \$3. A distinguished anthology of poems old and new, grave and gay. (12 and over)

\***EYES OF BOYHOOD.** Edited by Clyde Brion Davis. Lippincott. \$3.75. Humor and tragedy jostle each other in these exceptional selections from outstanding American authors that capture the immortal essence of boyhood. (12 and over)

**FUN, FUN, FUN.** Selected by Phyllis R. Fenner. Watts. \$2.50. Well-chosen, humorous stories for older children. (12 and over)

**SPACE, SPACE, SPACE.** Selected by William Sloane. Watts. \$2.50. Top-notch stories of the world of tomorrow for space-minded youngsters of today. (12 and over)

\***STORIES OF THE SEA.** Selected by Phyllis R. Fenner. Illus. by Kurt Werth. Knopf. \$3. An outstanding collection of tales of adventure, some from books out of print, by an expert anthologist. (12 and over)

**BATTLE STATIONS: True Stories of Men in War.** Selected by Margaret C. Scoggin. Knopf. \$3. Danger and death on land, in the air and on the sea in World War II, thrillingly and realistically recounted. (12 and over)

## Christmas

**THE CHRISTMAS BUNNY.** Written and illus. by Will and Nicolas. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50. Davy's Christmas Eve dream of frolic with the animals in the woods seems very real in exciting modern pictures. (5-7)

**NOEL FOR JEANNE-MARIE.** Written and illus. by Francoise. Scribners. \$2.25. Père Noël brings joy to Jeanne-Marie and her pet lamb. Charming pictures. (5-7)

\***THE HEIR TO CHRISTMAS.** By Patricia Gordon. Illus. by Garry MacKenzie. Viking. \$2. A legacy of old toys brings family warmth to a little boy's lonely Christmas. (7-9)

**STAR OF WONDER.** By Robert R. Coles and Frances Frost. Illus. by Paul Galdone. Whittlesey. \$2.25. The Star of Bethlehem shines again in the Planetarium. Reverence and spiritual insight illuminate the scientific explanation. (8 and over)

\***AMERICAN FOLK SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS.** By Ruth Crawford Seeger. Illus. by Barbara Cooney. Doubleday. \$3. Songs for Christmas, covering all aspects of the season, in a book highlighted by captivating pictures. (all ages)

## For the youngest: under five

\***SLEEPY ABC.** By Margaret Wise Brown. Illus. by Esphyr Slobodkina. Lothrop. \$2. A relaxing ABC with refreshing pictures.

**IT IS NIGHT.** Written and illus. by Phyllis Rowand. Harper. \$1.75. Cozy, gentle going-to-sleep book with unusual soft pictures to match.

**BABY'S FRIENDS.** Written and illus. by Charlotte Steiner. Peggy Cloth-Books. \$1.50. Washable cloth book of animal pictures with its own attached toy.

\***BABY FARM ANIMALS.** Written and illus. by Garth Williams. Simon & Schuster. \$1. Baby animals — from pigs to puppies — look out with appealing eyes from the cardboard pages of this perfect book for small hands.

**GREEN EYES.** Written and illus. by A. Birnbaum. Capitol. \$2.50. Large, unusual water-colors tell a gentle story about familiar farm animals.

**ANOTHER DAY.** Written and illus. by Marie Hall Ets. Viking. \$1.75. A small boy and his fancied animal friends have a frolic in the woods in a simple repetitive tale with amusing pictures.

**6 O'CLOCK ROOSTER.** Written and illus. by Melvern Barker. Oxford. \$2.50. A little city boy visits his country cousin and gradually gets used to the country noises.

\***LITTLE FRIGHTENED TIGER.** By Golden

MacDonald. Illus. by Leonard Weisgard. Doubleday. \$2.50. An endearing fable wherein a baby tiger learns that everyone is afraid of something.  
\*THE VERY LITTLE GIRL. By Phyllis Krasilovsky. Illus. by Ninon. Doubleday. \$1.50. Delicate pictures follow a little girl as she grows, until she's quite big enough to be helpful.

FAST IS NOT A LADYBUG. By Miriam Schlein. Illus. by Leonard Kessler. Scott. \$1.75. The concepts of "slow" and "fast" contrasted in modern pictures which explain the text.

HIPPETY HOP AROUND THE BLOCK. By Gladys M. Horn. Illus. by Dorcas. Whitman. 15¢. A little boy's walk in the city described in appealing verse in a friendly little book.

KIKI GOES TO CAMP. Written and illus. by Charlotte Steiner. Doubleday. \$1.50. Another picture-story about Kiki and her happy little adventures.

HURRAH FOR FREDDIE! Written and illus. by Robert Bright with Dorothy Brett. Doubleday. \$2. Jaunty fantasy about a toy drummer who woke up the Queen on her Coronation Day.

A DAY WITH DADDY. By Alvin Tresselt. Illus. by Helen Heller. Lothrop. \$1.50. Clear photographs take a child through the day's routines.

ON A SUMMER DAY. Written and illus. by Lois Lenski. Oxford. \$1.25. Short rhymes and attractive pictures provide entertainment and play ideas.

LITTLE GOLDEN BOOKS, Simon & Schuster. 25¢ each.

\*WIGGLES. By Louise Woodcock. Illus. by Eloise Wilkin.

ANIMAL FRIENDS. By Jane Werner. Illus. by Garth Williams.

THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF. Illus. by Richard Scarry.

WONDER BOOKS. 25¢ each.

\*WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE. By Ralph B. Raphael. Illus. by Art Seiden.

WHO LIKES DINNER? By Evelyn Beyer. Illus. by Dellwyn Cunningham.

PETER GOES TO SCHOOL. By Wanda Rogers House. Illus. by Hal W. Doremus.

THE MAGIC WORD. By Charlotte Zolotow. Illus. by Eleanor Dart.

GUESS WHAT? By Leonore Klein. Illus. by Ruth Wood.

JOLLY BOOKS. 25¢

UP GOES THE HOUSE. By Harry Gustavson. Illus. by Robert Doremus.

Inexpensive, colorful picture-books about everyday things and interests in a child's world.

#### *Ages five, six and seven*

HOTSPUR. Written and illus. by Mariana. Lothrop. \$1.25. The daring adventures of a runaway toy horse in a rollicking small picture-story.

BERTIE BEAR'S CIRCUS.

WOLFY'S REWARD.

HORACE HEDGEHOG'S FIREWORK. Written and illus. by Geoffrey Higham. British Book Center. 75¢ each. Tiny, attractively illustrated books each telling a lively animal story.

\*JOURNEY CAKE, HO! By Ruth Sawyer. Illus. by Robert McCloskey. Viking. \$2.50. The journey cake and the boy go a-journeyming and come home at last. The "Gingerbread Boy" pattern in a new folk tale, with exuberant pictures.

PITSCHI. Written and illus. by Hans Fischer. Harcourt, Brace. \$3. Exciting pictures illustrate the old story of a kitten who wanted to be something else, but found being himself was best after all.

\*FLORINA AND THE WILD BIRD. By Alois

Carigiet. Illus. by Selina Chonz. Oxford. \$3. A summer idyll in the Swiss Alps in which Ursli appears again with his sister in a poetic tale, exquisitely pictured.

NO DUCKS FOR DINNER. By Rosalys Hall. Illus. by Kurt Werth. Oxford. \$2.50. Delightful nonsense about a bus driver and his troublesome passengers in the French countryside.

\*MADELINE'S RESCUE. Written and illus. by Ludwig Bemelmans. Viking. \$3. Another rhymed adventure of the spirited little French girl and a boarding school dog in a captivating picture book.

\*TIM IN DANGER. Written and illus. by Edward Ardizzone. Oxford. \$2. Further adventures of that redoubtable, small, sea-going hero, Tim, and his friend Charlotte, in a hilarious tale with funnier-than-ever pictures.

HIDE-AND-SEEK VOYAGE. Written and illus. by Erling Gunnar Fischer. Ariel. \$2.50. From Sweden comes this jolly picture-tale of two children and their voyage to Africa.

PETUNIA TAKES A TRIP. Written and illus. by Roger Duvoisin. Knopf. \$2. That lovable silly goose has further adventures, this time exploring the big city, in amusing pictures and text.

THE SAILOR DOG. By Margaret Wise Brown. Illus. by Garth Williams. Simon & Schuster. 25¢. Scuppers, a very individual dog, loves life on the bounding main. Pictures catch the spirit.

THE MAILBOX TAKES A HOLIDAY. Written and illus. by F. J. Jupo. Macmillan. \$1. The frolicsome adventures of a mailbox, a street wastebasket and a traffic light AWOL.

BOXES. By Jean Merrill. Illus. by Ronni Solbert. Coward-McCann. \$2.50. How the whole town came to realize that boxes are important makes an amusing picture-story.

THE COW VOYAGE. Written and illus. by Earle Goodenow. Knopf. \$2. Colorful, humorous pictures enliven this tale of a little girl and her wonderful musical cows.

THE POPCORN DRAGON. By Jane Thayer. Illus. by Jay Hyde Barnum. Morrow. \$2. A show-off dragon and his animal friends make an amusing, easy-to-read fantasy.

THE HORSE WITH THE EASTER BONNET. By Jane Thayer. Illus. by Jay Hyde Barnum. Morrow. \$2. An Easter bonnet inspires tired Josie to pull her carriage through the park with new sparkle.

THE AMBITIOUS ELEPHANT. Written and illus. by Katherine Wood. McKay. \$1.50. In practicing her act a performing elephant turns a town upside-down.

SUZY AND THE DOG SCHOOL. By Esther MacLellan and Catherine Schroll. Illus. by Margaret Bradfield. Ariel. \$1.75. Nonsensical picture-tale of a lovable cocker spaniel and her proud moment.

SAM AND THE INKSPOT. Written and illus. by Margaret S. Johnson. Morrow. \$2. Simple adventures of a kitten and puppy with attractive pictures. Excellent for first readers.

A HOUSE FOR LEANDER. By Rebecca K. Sprinkle. Illus. by Maurice W. Robertson. Abingdon. \$1.50. A boy gets the dog he longs for and a specially designed dog house, too.

HIDE-AWAY PUPPY. By Jessica Potter Broderick. Illus. by Dotti. Rand McNally. 25¢. Adventures of a runaway puppy in which the reader helps in the hunt.

JONATHAN. By Sally Scott. Illus. by Beth Krush. Harcourt, Brace. \$2. Tongue-in-cheek humor in the story of a wise cat who trains his new owners to his own taste.

HECTOR AND MR. MURFIT. Written and illus. by Audrey Chalmers. Viking. \$1.75. Too big for a house in the city, a lovable dog finds a satisfying solution. Brief text and many pictures invite the beginning reader.

DYNAMITE. Written and illus. by Nils Hogner. Aladdin. \$2. Real "western" of a boy and his horse told simply enough for young listeners, and with action enough for self-readers.

THE GOLDEN BUNNY. By Margaret Wise Brown. Illus. by Leonard Weisgard. Simon & Schuster. \$1.50. Rhythmic prose and gentle verse about rabbits and other creatures in a colorful picture-book.

\*PETER'S LONG WALK. By Lee Kingman. Illus. by Barbara Cooney. Doubleday. \$2.50. Endearing pictures follow Peter as he walks in the woods and encounters many creatures in his search for a playmate.

\*FOLLOW THE ROAD. By Alvin Tresselt. Illus. by Roger Duvoisin. Lothrop. \$2. The little boy stopped to play, but the road went on and on; where it went and what it passed makes a beautiful picture-book.

MICHAEL'S FRIENDS. By Rose Dobbs. Illus. by Flavia Gag. Coward-McCann. \$2. A small city boy's search for friends is rewarded in a pleasantly repetitive story with amusing pictures.

THE QUIET MOTHER AND THE NOISY LITTLE BOY. By Charlotte Zolotow. Illus. by Kurt Werth. Lothrop. \$2. A mother who liked quiet and a small boy who liked noise discover that they both prefer some of each.

\*THE TAMING OF TOBY. By Jerrold Beim. Illus. by Tracy Sugarman. Morrow. \$2. A lively boy finds out why he must conform in school in a story told with humor and sympathy.

ERIC ON THE DESERT. By Jerrold Beim. Illus. by Louis Darling. Morrow. \$2. Inviting, easy-to-read little-boy story about things that happen on the Arizona desert.

STEPHEN'S TRAIN. By Margaret G. Otto. Illus. by Mary Stevens. Holt. \$2. A small boy's first train ride by himself is made memorable by all the nice people he meets.

†TOMMY AND DEE-DEE. Written and illus. by Yen Liang. Oxford. \$1.50. International understanding on the very youngest level in a picture-story showing how much alike are small Americans and small Chinese.

THE ANIMAL TRAIN. By Catherine Woolley. Illus. by Robb Beebe. Morrow. \$2.50. A group of lively and funny stories excellent for reading aloud or self-reading.

**Ages seven, eight and nine**

SCRAMBLED EGGS SUPER. Written and illus. by Dr. Seuss. Random. \$2.50. Riotous humor in picture and verse as another enterprising Seuss creature hunts uncommon eggs for a super deluxe dish.

\*CINDERELLA'S MOUSE AND OTHER FAIRY TALES. Written and illus. by Rosalie K. Fry. Dutton. \$2. Extraordinarily delicate and enchanting original fairy tales, especially for little girls.

\*THE MAGIC FISHBONE. By Charles Dickens. Illus. by Louis Slobodkin. Vanguard. \$2.50. The rare combination of humor and fantasy in Dickens' tale will be welcomed by a new generation of children in this delightfully illustrated edition.

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER. By Hans Christian Andersen. Illus. by Marcia Brown. Scribner. \$2.25. This most profound and sad Andersen fantasy presented in a beautiful picture-book; not for the very young reader.

\*THE MAGIC BALL FROM MARS. By Carl L. Biemiller. Illus. by Kathleen Voute. Morrow. \$2.50. Tender story of a little boy, a flying saucer and a man from Mars.

LITTLE WITCH. By Anna Elizabeth Bennett. Illus. by Helen Stone. Lippincott. \$2.50. A witch's daughter rebels and finally succeeds in achieving the status of respectability.

THE WONDERFUL FASHION DOLL. Written and illus. by Laura Bannon. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.25. A little girl's search for a fashion doll belonging to her great, great, great grandmother, in an easy-to-read story.

WINONA'S PONY CART. By Maud Hart Lovelace. Illus. by Vera Neville. Crowell. \$2. A birthday party and its happy aftermath in an appealing little-girl story of small-town Minnesota not too long ago.

THREE BIRTHDAY WISHES. By Ruth Langland Holberg. Illus. by Lisl Weil. Crowell. \$2.50. Happy doings of the twins, Bobby and Nancy, and their old friend the Catnip Man, with humorous illustrations.

A PONY WORTH HIS SALT. By Elizabeth Hubbard Lansing. Illus. by Barbara Cooney. Crowell. \$2. Adventures and misadventures of three children and their pony on a farm. Enchanting pictures.

JUDY JO'S MAGIC ISLAND. Written and illus. by Mabel Betsy Hill. Lippincott. \$2.50. Exciting summer adventures of a little girl and her friends make enjoyable reading.

SAL FISHER, BROWNIE SCOUT. By L. S. Gardner. Illus. by Mary Stevens. Watts. \$2. Brownie scouts, present and future, will cherish this warm story of a good troop.

\*BEANIE. By Ruth and Latrobe Carroll. Illus. by Ruth Carroll. Oxford. \$2.50. A small boy and his birthday pup go after a bear, and vice versa, in a beautifully illustrated tale of the Great Smoky Mountains.

CIRCUS, APRIL FIRST. Written and illus. by Louis Slobodkin. Macmillan. \$2. April fool's day and a red, white and blue elephant combine to create happy excitement.

\*ICE CREAM FOR TWO. Written and illus. by Clare Turley Newberry. Harper. \$2.50. Ice cream for breakfast on an unforgettable day for Bruce, his kitten and his mother in a touching story with exquisite pictures.

LUCKY BLACKY. By Eunice Lackey. Illus. by Winifred Greene. Watts. \$2.50. A stray cat wins friends and influences people in an easy-to-read, gaily illustrated story.

THE UNRULY ROBIN. Written and illus. by Dora-thea Dana. Abelard. \$2.50. Humor and warm family details give special appeal to this story of the raising of a bird.

\*SHADRACH. By Meindert DeJong. Illus. by Maurice Sendak. Harper. \$2.50. Sensitive story of little Davie and his black rabbit, and the miracle of owning a living thing. A book for parents to share with children.

THE BEATINEST BOY. By Jesse Stuart. Illus. by Robert G. Henneberger. Whittlesey. \$2.25. An orphaned boy shows his love for his grandmother by his ingenuity in making her Christmas present.

HOLIDAY ON WHEELS. By Catherine Woolley. Illus. by Iris Beatty Johnson. Morrow. \$2.50. Another book about David, full of realism, and humor and fine father-son experiences.

EDDIE'S PAY DIRT. Written and illus. by Carolyn Haywood. Morrow. \$2.50. Eddie Wilson returns from Texas with various strange treasures which will delight his old friends.

**THREE BOYS AND A TUGBOAT.** By Nan Hayden Agle and Ellen Wilson. Illus. by Marian Honigman. Scribners. \$2.25. This time the lively triplets have a real sea-going adventure on their uncle's tugboat. Good for self-reading.

**DONNY AND COMPANY.** By Elizabeth Kinsey. Illus. by Mary Stevens. Watts. \$2.50. Easy-to-read account of a small boy's busy summer with his friends and family in a small town.

**STAR OF WILD HORSE CANYON.** By Clyde Robert Bulla. Illus. by Grace Paull. Crowell. \$2. A boy acquires a horse of his own in this pleasant, easy-to-read "western."

**BIG BLACK HORSE.** By Walter Farley. Random. \$1. The beloved *Black Stallion* story adapted by its author for younger readers in a large, striking picture-book.

**THE HEART FOR BASEBALL.** By Marion Renick. Illus. by Paul Galdone. Scribners. \$2.25. A lively baseball story for beginning players and readers.

**EVERYDAY ADVENTURE STORIES.** Messner. \$1.60 each.

**BROWNIE MAKES THE HEADLINES.** By Ted Wear. Illus. by Louis J. Ravielli.

**PEANUT BUTTER MASCOT.** By Helen D. Olds. Illus. by Ursula Koering.

Two of a useful series of informational, easy-to-read stories, the first about the making of a newspaper, the second, a trip through a peanut-butter factory.

**EAGLE FEATHER.** By Clyde Robert Bulla. Illus. by Tom Two Arrows. Crowell. \$2.50. Sturdy, satisfying tale of an Indian boy's summer experiences with too-grasping relatives. Invitingly printed for self-reading.

**\*MAGIC MAIZE.** Written and illus. by Mary and Conrad Buff. Houghton Mifflin. \$3. An enterprising boy finds how to reconcile the old ways and the new in Guatemala. Illustrations convey the color and feeling of the land.

**RAIN IN THE WINDS.** Written and illus. by Claire and George Louden. Scribners. \$2.50. Modern India in the story of a boy, his village and his pet elephant. Unusual pictures.

**WU, THE GATEKEEPER'S SON.** Written and illus. by Eleanor Frances Lattimore. Morrow. \$2. Bygone days in China in stories about a lively six-year old.

**THE JOURNEY OF JOSIAH TALLTATTERS.** By Josephine Balfour Payne. Illus. by Joan Balfour Payne. Ariel. \$2.75. An itinerant preacher, his nephew and pets travel in the 1800's from Philadelphia to Natchez, Miss., and find friends and adventures.

**THE MISSION BELL.** Written and illus. by Leo Politi. Scribners. \$2.25. An Indian boy goes with Father Serra as he journeys through California to establish the first Spanish missions. Superb illustrations.

**THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD.** By Eleanor Graham Vance. Illus. by Jay Hyde Barnum. Random. \$1. Sherwood Forest and its merry men in a colorful account of the redoubtable outlaw and his companions. Written simply for younger readers.

**THOMAS ALVA EDISON, INVENTOR.** By Ruth Cromer Weir. Illus. by Albert Orbaan. Abingdon. \$1.50. Vivid account of an inventive genius, from his boyhood to his mature triumphs.

**CHILDHOOD OF GREAT AMERICANS SERIES.** Bobbs Merrill. \$1.75 each.

**WILLIAM BRADFORD, PILGRIM BOY.** By Bradford Smith. Illus. by Paul Busch.



All the poignant  
mystery of growing up is  
in this magnetic story  
of a boy who had a  
secret wish . . .

## ... AND NOW MIGUEL

By JOSEPH KRUMGOLD

32 illustrations by Jean Charlot

**T**his is Miguel Chavez, who comes from a sheep-raising family near Taos, New Mexico, and who yearns to go with the men of his family to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. But Miguel has a problem—he is too young to get everything he wants, like his older brother, Gabriel . . . too old to be happy with everything he has, like little Pedro. And therein lies his secret wish.

Readers of all ages will be delighted with the understanding story and the sensitive illustrations which portray this last great adventure of a boy—and first great adventure as a man. Based on a full-length documentary—a story that actually happened—written and directed by Mr. Krumgold and distributed overseas by the State Department.

Ages 11 up. \$2.75

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

New York 16

WILL CLARK, BOY IN BUCKSKINS. By Katherine E. Wilkie. Illus. by Harry Lees.

ROBERT PEARY, BOY OF THE NORTH. By Electa Clark. Illus. by Bernard Barton.

DAN BEARD, BOY SCOUT. By Miriam E. Mason. Illus. by Paul Laune.

Four new titles in this useful series of biographical stories, each a lively tale of boyhood adventures leading to later achievement, and each reflecting the background of the times in which its hero lived. Designed for easy reading.

### Ages nine, ten and eleven

\*THE BORROWERS. By Mary Norton. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50. The "little people" of old in a modern fantasy full of bewitching detail.

WHICH WAS WITCH? By Eleanor M. Jewett. Viking. \$2.50. Lively ghosts and magic from Korea.

LITTLE DERMOT AND THE THIRSTY STONES AND OTHER IRISH FOLK TALES. Written and illus. by Richard Bennett. Coward-McCann. \$2.50. Folk tale devotees and story-tellers will embrace this book with its fine illustrations.

\*MISS PICKERELL AND THE GEIGER COUNTER.

\*MISS PICKERELL GOES UNDERSEA. By Ellen MacGregor. Whittlesey. \$2.25 each. There's nobody quite like Miss Pickerell. More of her incredible adventures, full of fascinating science information, mixed with fun.

YOUNG VISITOR TO MARS. By Richard M. Elam, Jr. Lantern. \$2.50. Two children, taken to Mars by their scientist parents, have strange and exciting adventures.

FREDDY AND THE SPACE SHIP. By Walter R. Brooks. Knopf. \$3. Our old friend Freddy, the pig, takes off for Mars with Mr. Bean, with some surprising results.

\*THE WOODEN LOCKET. By Alice Alison Lide and Margaret Alison Johansen. Viking. \$2.50. How a locket helps a family of Polish D.P.s to make a place for themselves in an Alabama community.

\*MAMA HATTIE'S GIRL. Written and illus. by Lois Lenski. Lippincott. \$3. The experiences of a little Negro girl in a small town in the South and in a northern city enrich our understanding of her problems.

\*CURIOS MISSIE. By Virginia Sorensen. Har-

court, Brace. \$2.75. How a little girl's insatiable curiosity helps a rural community get a bookmobile makes a warm and humorous story.

TESSIE'S CARAVAN. Written and illus. by Priscilla M. Warner. Doubleday. \$2.50. An abandoned gypsy caravan provides Tessie with a too-good retreat. Fine story of growing up with its rewards and setbacks.

†READY-MADE FAMILY. By Frances Salomon Murphy. Crowell. \$2.50. Real and moving story of a family of three children and their new foster parents.

ENCHANTED ISLAND. By Elizabeth Ladd. Morrow. \$2.50. Realistic yet tender story of a little girl who finds her real home at last.

†PAT AND HER POLICEMAN. By Frieda Friedman. Morrow. \$2.50. A little girl helps her policeman father and learns a great deal about herself in a realistic story, full of family and neighborhood incidents.

LAST HURDLE. By F. K. Brown. Crowell. \$2.50. Spunk and determination help Kathy get her horse and train him. Good characterization in an attractively illustrated book.

\*AND NOW MIGUEL. By Joseph Krungold. Crowell. \$2.75. Not the youngest nor the oldest of a large sheep-herding family in New Mexico, Miguel tells of his world and his inner problems. This story of his growing up is a profound and moving picture.

SHOW LAMB. By Hildreth T. Wriston. Abingdon. \$2.50. How a plucky small boy raises a prize lamb, makes an entertaining, easy-to-read family story.

TORNADO JONES. By Trella Lamson Dick. Wilcox & Follett. \$2.95. A boy's urgent need to know who he really is forms the core of a warm and absorbing story with a slight mystery.

GABEE OF THE DELTA. By Steve Benedict. Abingdon. \$2. A French Cajun boy spends a winter trapping with his father in this satisfying story enhanced by flavorful language.

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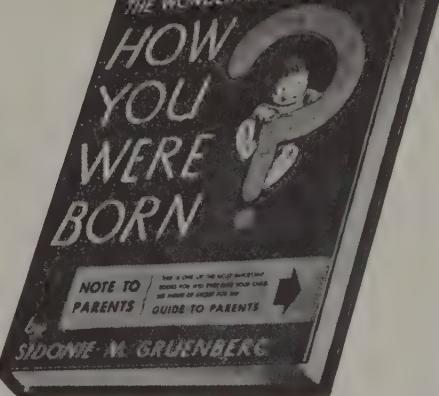
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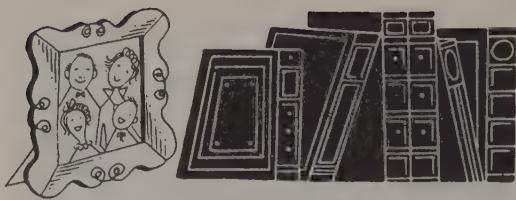
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## Book reviews

**Effective Home-School Relations**

By James L. Hymes, Jr.

*New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953. \$4.65.*

Dr. Hymes has once more drawn on his intimate knowledge of human behavior to give us a helpful book on home-school relationships. His aim is to offer a practical guide to more effective cooperation between parents and teachers, and to explore both the principles of such cooperation and the programs and techniques which help to achieve it. The author's familiarity with the school environment and his perceptive understanding of people enable him to communicate graphically many principles of the interpersonal relations involved in this situation. Written in a pleasant, informal style, which reflects Dr. Hymes' warm acceptance of people, this book brings into new focus many familiar truths, and includes some highly pertinent, suggestive material.

One possible objection, however, is that Dr. Hymes puts so much emphasis on the need for the teacher to understand the parent, without stressing proportionately the equal need for parents to appreciate the teacher's motivation. Although it may seem desirable and sometimes even necessary for teachers to take the initiative and responsibility for a program of better home-school relationships, it is hardly realistic to expect them to do so effectively at all times. To add this demanding responsibility to their already heavy load might well make teachers feel even more harassed than at present. Also, while the text is addressed to principals as well as teachers, little consideration is given to the possibility that someone in the school administration besides the individual

teacher might accept leadership in creating a more effective school-home program.

As an introductory guide to the subject of cooperation between home and school, this volume has much to offer. The lists of pertinent films and the suggestions of specific techniques for planning meetings, offer practical aid in programming. The outline for the use of parents who are observing in a classroom and the discussion of school publications for parents are further valuable contributions.

Teachers will find the third chapter, on parents and schools, an extremely frank and understanding discussion, and are likely to discover that even a single reading can help them to build better relationships. This chapter also points out the difficulty in which our schools find themselves because of a cultural conflict between the need for change and the unwillingness of some parents and teachers to accept new methods. Dr. Hymes is also extremely skillful in presenting the dual reactions of the teacher and the parent to the same situation. His ability to see the total situation objectively will be of inestimable help to anyone facing similar circumstances, as all parents and teachers do sometimes.

Towards the end of the book, Dr. Hymes introduces some suggestions which may be challenged by thoughtful readers. The whole question of parent participation in school life as actual teachers is one which deserves more careful evaluation than is presented here, whereas the use of non-teaching community personnel as a resource for the school has been given too little consideration.

The importance of maintaining good home-school relations at the upper school level is a very valid point and one which justifies the emphasis given by Dr. Hymes. His goal of achieving healthier environmental soil for children's growth through closer understanding between parent and teacher is especially desirable in these times of misconceptions and misinterpretations.

JANET E. CHASE  
*For the Bibliography Committee*

## Group leadership course

The Child Study Association of America, on October 21, 1953, began the third year of its program of training professional workers for leadership of parent groups. This program, which was initiated in the Spring of 1951, is based on the organization's long experience with parent groups. It focuses on group discussion under trained leadership as one of the effective methods of enabling parents to understand and meet their children's needs, and to become aware of their own vital role in their children's personality growth.

This training program was formulated by the Child Study Association in conjunction with a technical advisory committee consisting of Dr. Marianne Kris and Dr. Peter B. Neubauer, psychiatrists, and Katherine M. Wolf, psychologist. Philip Zlatchin, psychologist and educator, has recently been added to this committee. The program is being carried on as a pilot project by a faculty consisting of these advisors, other psychiatrists and psychologists and members of the staff of the Association. It consists of an intensive period of training which includes teaching sessions on theoretical material relating to both content and method of parent group education, observation of parent groups, seminars and supervised field work.

The first two groups in the training program were drawn from the field of social work. The present group is made up of specially selected people from various fields of education, such as nursery, elementary and religious schools. All participants in the program come as representatives of their respective schools or organizations. Another group

from the public health field is now being planned.

This program is described in the Association's pamphlet on *Parent Group Education and Leadership Training* which was revised in 1953 and has been used widely by educational, health and welfare organizations. (Price 35¢)

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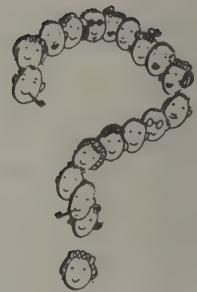
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These questions are selected and discussed  
by the Child Study Association  
staff, and the answers written by its various members



# Parents' questions

## The imaginary playmate

*My three-year-old daughter has an imaginary friend, "Honey," whom she treats like a real member of the family. "Honey" is often with us at meals; "she" is blamed for small incidents of forgetfulness and is a nightly companion when my daughter discusses some of the events of the day. I know this is quite usual for young children, but I am not always certain how to handle "her" presence, especially when it is inconvenient.*

MRS. B. K. R.

"Honey" or her prototype is, as you say, a member of many families where there are three- and four-year olds. Though children this age treat imaginary friends as if they were real and alive, they do realize the "pretend" nature of these friends.

Children at this age are developing concepts of right and wrong and an inner self, which can become a burdensome process. Sharing ideas, feelings and guilt with another self eases daily growth. You should therefore accept "Honey" if your daughter needs her, and not laugh at or tease her about her "companion."

Since "Honey" was created by your daughter to satisfy some need of hers, it is to be expected that sometimes you and your little girl will have divergent opinions about the treatment of the fantasy child. It can cer-

tainly be trying if your child demands that an empty seat be left for "Honey" in a crowded bus, or insists that it was "Honey" who spilled the milk and not she. Your own sense of reality is an aid to both of you in these situations. "Honey" need not be destroyed, nor should "she" ever be used as a threat or a competitor, as: "If you don't eat your lunch I'll give it to 'Honey,' or send 'her' away." Instead, "she" can sit on a lap in the bus: "she" can be a partner in the milk spilling. At the same time it is well not to overdo your acceptance and to gently let the child know that this is a sort of game to you. Thus you can help your little girl learn to deal realistically with the more difficult aspects of living.

## First overnight visit

*Our four-year-old daughter has several times asked to stay overnight at her grandmother's without us. The first time we agreed to this, she began to cry as soon as we started to leave her. A few weeks later, when we tried again at her request, she was fine until she was in a strange bed and then was so miserable and restless that her grandmother had to send for us to take her home. Should we make her stay, once she says she*

will, or just not have her visit overnight at all?  
MR. AND MRS. J. A. D.

It is not unusual for children who are beginning to enjoy a sense of being independent in some areas (dressing, playing outdoors alone), to want to try new situations as a measure of being more "grown up." They sometimes try a new experience in words to get the feel of it, but cannot really anticipate what the actual experience will be like, if they have nothing similar with which to compare it. Parents often sense this intuitively and try to prepare a child beforehand about a coming event which will be new and possibly frightening to him.

As in all things, children need gradual preparation for even temporary separation from their parents. Introduction of a reliable sitter at an early age is a first step. Trips with parents which include napping away from home are other steps. The first few experiences of sleeping out overnight will be easier if the parents remain, too, though preferably in another room. In any of these experiences away from home, it is reassuring to the child to have with him his favorite blanket or toy, if this is the "company" he usually depends on at bedtime.

Children sometimes overreach themselves in what they want to try. Where parents sense this, they can help the child feel comfortable about keeping within his own limits. If he is insistent on trying a new experience, as your child apparently was, and yet it proves too much for him to handle, he can be helped to retreat gracefully. His parents can give him the assurance that people often find they don't like something the first time which turns out to be fun later on. After waiting a while, the parents can then prepare the child for the experience he seems to want by giving him an opportunity to try,

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first, one of the intermediate steps suggested above before he again attempts to stay at a relative's or friend's home overnight without his parents.

#### **Adopting a nephew**

*My seven-and-a-half-year-old nephew, an only child, has just lost his mother, who was my sister. I feel so sorry for the little boy I would like to take him into my home permanently and have thought of adopting him. However, my own son, who is about the same age, became very upset when I talked with him about my plan and shows such marked jealousy of his cousin that I do not know what to do. My son and his cousin have always been good friends. How can I handle this situation wisely?*

MRS. A. S. D.

Your feelings of sympathy for your nephew and your wish to mother and comfort

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New York 16

him are natural. Taking him into your home may be the best solution to the difficult problem of providing loving care for him. However, the very strength of your feelings may make it difficult for you to be aware of and understand the feelings of other people who have been affected by the death of your sister. For example, your nephew's need to keep his mother in her true relationship to him in his feeling and thinking of her is probably very great. He would only be confused and possibly fearful if he tried to accept you as a mother. As an aunt whom he already loves and trusts, you are in a better position to provide him with the warmth and acceptance he needs. Possibly your son is hurt that you seem to be offering to another child a place in your affection which he has every reason to believe is rightfully his. If the true relationship is maintained, not only could he share your love with his cousin, but probably would be able to continue the fond and companionable relationship which you indicate has existed between the two boys.

Also to be considered is the need which your brother-in-law and your nephew have to develop a good father and son relationship that will in some measure make their loss less difficult to bear. If legal adoption involved a change of the boy's name, as is usually the case, this in itself might prove disturbing to the relationship. Also, it might give the already bereaved child a further sense of loss—loss of his identity.

You will be doing a great service if you can give your nephew a home where he has his own special place in the family but is left free to keep intact his feelings toward his parents and toward you.

## **Why won't they play at home?**

*I am distressed because my two boys, ages ten and eight, do not stay at home to play. Our house is small and there is not much space in the children's bedroom, but we have a good-sized backyard and have equipped it with swings, a see-saw and iron bars on*

which they can climb. They have perhaps more than most children in the way of toys for both indoor and outdoor activity. Why is it that neither our sons nor their friends like to play at our home?

Mrs. M. M. J.

In order to answer your question you will need to explore the less apparent possibilities in the situation. First of all you might look at your own feelings. Are you unusually anxious to have your children within sight because you fear what may happen to them or what they may be doing or with whom they may be when they are not at home? If so, perhaps they feel that you do not have confidence in them and need to express their resentment by going elsewhere. If you have helped them to acquire good standards of behavior and ability to assume responsibility, do you need to be anxious or can you let them continue to learn by handling ordinary everyday experiences in their own fashion?

Possibly in your eagerness to make their friends welcome in your home you have made your presence too much felt by asking questions and making comments on their activities, or by looking or calling out the windows. Sometimes even the offering of refreshments by the parent can make children uncomfortable although they will happily get for themselves whatever they have been told they may have.

Boys your son's age have a strong feeling about belonging to a group or a gang and like to have a shack or meeting place for the group where secrets may be kept from

adults toward whom, characteristically at this age, they look with suspicion as being "against" them. This does not mean that they don't love their parents as individuals but that this is a phase of development when adventures with their peers is of the utmost importance to them.

### Film premier at CSAA meeting

The premiere of a new film, *Head of the House*, was the attraction offered to its members by the Child Study Association of America at a meeting on the evening of October 13th. This film, produced by Affiliated Films, under the sponsorship of the Mental Health Film Board for the U.S. Information Service, was primarily intended for distribution in Germany. However, the audience at this showing was strongly of the opinion that it would also have great interest and value for parents, teachers and community groups in the United States.

Its presentation of the authoritarian father and the effect of his rigid attitudes on his young son carefully avoids exaggeration of the father's shortcomings, and therefore leaves the way open for fruitful audience discussion. The boy's role is beautifully handled, and the photography excellent. The part that community agencies can play in a situation like this is stressed — but here again, there is no suggestion that there is an easy cure for such emotional disturbances as developed in this youngster. The film will be available upon application to the Mental Health Film Board, 164 East 38th St., New York City.

Dr. Bertram Schaffner, psychiatrist, discussed the film after the showing and pointed out the various kinds and degrees of authoritarianism depicted, or suggested, by the film. Mr. Irving Jacoby, producer of *Head of the House*, spoke of the purpose of the film and some of the discussions and research that went into its creation.

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## New CSAA consultant

Dr. Bertram Gosliner has succeeded Dr. Grace McLean Abbate as Psychiatric Consultant to the Counseling Service of the Child Study Association of America. Dr. Gosliner, a practicing psychoanalyst, is a graduate of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. He has served as consultant to several community agencies in New York City.

## Affiliation with WFMH

By vote of its Board of Directors, the Child Study Association of America, which took a very active part in the organization of the first International Congress on Mental Health, has now formally affiliated itself with the World Federation for Mental Health, a non-governmental agency with headquarters in London.

The next International Congress on Mental Health is to be held in Toronto, Canada, Aug. 14-21, 1954.

## Parent Education merger

At the meeting of the National Council on Family Relations held this fall, the National Committee on Parent Education resolved to merge with the Parent Education Section of the National Council. Dr. Gunnar Dybwad, CSAA Director, was elected chairman of this section for 1954. It is hoped that the merger of the two Parent Education bodies will give new emphasis to the place of parent education in the whole field of family relationships.

## Pamphlet for stepmothers

Mrs. George Van Trump Burgess, CSAA Vice President and author of the Child Study Association pamphlet, "Discipline, What Is It?" has written a new pamphlet, published by the Public Affairs Committee, entitled "Stepmothers Can Be Nice!" This helpful discussion of the stepmother's role in various family situations is available from Public Affairs Pamphlets, 22 E. 38th St., N. Y. 16, at 25¢ a copy.

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